

March 11, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC—Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voted today for a House resolution urging the President to designate 2009 “The Year of the Military Family.” The resolution passed by a vote of 422 to 0. The resolution affirms that Congress expresses its deepest appreciation to the families of members of the Armed Forces who serve, or have served, in defense of the United States; recognizes the contributions that military families make and encourages the people of the United States to share their appreciation for the sacrifices military families give on behalf of the United States; and encourages the people of the United States and the Department of Defense to observe the “Year of Military Family” with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

“As someone who served this nation for 31 years in the Navy, I know the toll deployments take on the families of our Armed Service members,” said Congressman Sestak. “Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines don’t go to war—families go to war, and nations go to war. Just as we should never forget the brave men and women serving overseas in harm’s way, we should never forget the courageous family members that remain behind—family members that take care of children, that pick up the slack, that worry every night about the safety and well-being of loved ones who stand on the front lines in defense of our nation. It is in their honor that I proudly support designating this year officially—as all years should be in spirit— ‘The Year of the Military Family.’”

There are more than 1.8 million family members of Armed Forces members and an additional 1.1 million family members of reservists. Slightly more than half of all members of the regular and reserve components are married, and there are nearly 1.2 million children who are dependents of regular component members and over 713,000 children who are dependents of reserve component members.

This resolution affirms that the United States recognizes that military families are also serving their country, and the United States must ensure that all the needs of military dependent children are being met. Military families face unique challenges and difficulties that are inherent to military life, including long separations from loved ones, the repetitive demands of frequent deployments, and frequent uprooting of community ties resulting from moves to bases across the country and overseas. Thousands of military family members have taken on volunteer responsibilities to assist units and members of the Armed Forces who have been deployed by supporting family readiness groups, helping military spouses meet the demands of a single parent during a deployment, or providing a shoulder to cry on or the comfort of understanding. Military families provide members of the Armed Forces with the strength and emotional support that is needed from the home front for members preparing to deploy, who are deployed, or who are returning from deployment. The resolution also recognizes, with heartfelt sympathy and

deepest gratitude, the military families who have given the ultimate sacrifice in the loss of a family member in defense of the United States.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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